

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3911

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5882

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY AND BRZEZINSKI, NSC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT US IT

SUBJECT: PUBLIC STATEMENT ON EUROCOMMUNISM

I AM PLEASED THAT DEPARTMENT ISSUED PUBLIC STATEMENT ON EUROCOMMUNISM WHICH ON THE WHOLE HAS BEEN HELPFUL TO US HERE IN PUTTING TO REST FALSE SPECULATION THAT CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS TILTING TOWARD PCI. AT SAME TIME, I FEEL OBLIGED TO RECORD MY CONCERN ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF STATEMENT AND ON EVENTS LEADING UP TO ITS PUBLICATION:

1. WHILE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT ON EUROCOMMUNISM REPRESENTS USEFUL FORMULATION OF TWIN CONCEPTS OF NON-INTERVENTION AND NON-INDIFFERENCE, I WOULD POINT OUT THAT IT IS SOFTER IN TWO RESPECTS THAN FORMULATION WE AGREED ON IN PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM: (1) PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM EXPLICITLY EXPRESSES OUR CONCERN ABOUT WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY OF COMMUNIST PARTIES TO COOPERATE WITH US ON GROUND THAT THEY DO NOT SHARE OUR TRADITIONS, VALUES AND PRACTICES. LAST SENTENCE OF DEPARTMENT'S EUROCOMMUNISM STATEMENT, BY CONTRAST, DOES NOT MENTION COMMUNIST PARTIES EXPLICITLY, SO THAT PCI CAN ARGUE THEY ARE NOT COVERED. FORTUNATELY, ANSWER GIVEN APRIL 7 REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO "IDEOLOGICAL BASES AND GOVERNING PRACTICES OF A COMMUNIST PARTY" DOES

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HELP CLARIFY THIS POINT. (2) PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM SAYS WE PREFER THAT OUR ALLIES "BE GOVERNED" BY CON-COMMUNIST DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, WHILE DEPARTMENT'S EUROCOMMUNISM STATEMENT EXPRESSES CONCERN ONLY IF THEIR GOVERNMENTS COME TO BE "DOMINATED" BY NON-DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. THIS IS BEING INTERPRETED BY SOME HERE TO SUGGEST WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH GOVERNMENTS IN WHICH PCI WOULD PARTICIPATE BUT NOT DOMINATE. TO THAT EXTENT DEPARTMENT'S

EUROCOMMUNISM STATEMENT IS LESS HELPFUL HERE. OF COURSE, I RECOGNIZE THAT DEPARTMENT STATEMENT DEALT WITH EUROCOMMUNISM GENERALLY, WHILE PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM DEALT ONLY WITH ITALY, AND THEREFORE SOME DIFFERENCE IN WORDING WAS NECESSARY.

2. IN TERMS OF MY OWN MISSION, DETAY IN ISSUANCE OF STATEMENT HAD UNFORTUNATE EFFECT OF STIMULATING MISLEADING PRESS SPECULATION AND, MOST NOTABLY, NOVAK AND EVANS COLUMN, WHICH WAS WIDELY QUOTED HERE, SUGGESTING THERE WAS POLICY DIFFERENCE WITHIN US GOVERNMENT. NOVAK AND EVANS SOUGHT TO PORTRAY ME AS SEEKING TO ISSUE A "SOFT LINE" STATEMENT ON PCI--VIEW REPEATED BY STROBE TALBOTT IN CURRENT INTERNATIONAL EDITION OF TIME--WHICH AS YOU KNOW IS EXACT OPPOSITE OF TRUTH. WHILE OBVIOUSLY WE DO NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO KEEP NOVAK AND EVANS NONTROVERSY ALIVE, I DO BELIEVE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AND NSC STAFF SHOULD BE ASKED TO DENY CATEGORICALLY THAT THERE IS ANY DISAGREEMENT AMONG US OR THAT I HAVE TAKEN A "SOFT-LINE" VIEW. REPETITION IN PRESS OF FALSE IMPRESSION THAT I DIFFER IN ANY WAY FROM CONSENSUS IN WASHINGTON, PARTICULARLY IN A "SOFT" DIRECTION, CAN BE MOST HARMFSL TO SUCCESS OF MY MISSION HERE.
GARDNER

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